Amendments to the Specification

At page 1, after the title and before the heading "BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION," please add the following section:

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/222,897, filed August 3, 2000.

At page 7, please amend paragraph [0018] as follows:

[0018] ~~U.S. Patent Application 09/168,888~~ U.S. Patent No. 6,342,611 and WO 99/18856 disclose a whole cell assay wherein a fluorogenic or fluorescent reporter compound is used to measure the activity of intracellular caspases or other enzymes involved in apoptosis in living or dead whole cells or tissues. In this process, test substances, which may directly or indirectly induce apoptosis, are brought into contact with cells having intact membranes. If one or more of the substances is capable of inducing apoptosis, then intracellular caspase proteases are generated. The reporter compound serves as a substrate for these proteases and fluoresces after being cleaved. The reporter molecules can also be used to measure baseline caspase activity in cells that are not undergoing induced apoptosis. Hence, apoptosis inducing agents may be discovered by monitoring changes in

fluorescence occurring within the cells. This process may be used to find new compounds or new uses for known compounds in reducing, preventing or treating maladies in which apoptotic cell death is either a causative factor or a result.

At page 28, please amend paragraph [0091] as follows:

[0091] An aliquot of 45 µl of cells was also added to a well of a 96-well microtiter plate containing 5 µl of a 10% DMSO in RPMI 1640 medium without the test compounds as the control sample. The samples were gently mixed by agitation and then incubated at 37°C for 24 hr in a 5% CO_2-95% humidity incubator. After incubation, the samples were removed from the incubator and 50 µl of a solution containing 20 µM of *N*-(Ac-DEVD)-*N'*-ethoxycarbonyl-R110 (SEQ ID NO. 1) fluorogenic substrate (~~U.S. patent application 09/168,888;~~ U.S. Patent No. 6,342,611; WO 99/18856), 20mM DTT(Sigma) in Hanks Balanced Salt Solution (HBSS, Gibco) was added. The samples were mixed by agitation and incubated for 1 hr at room temperature. Using a fluorescent plate reader (Model 1420, Wallac Instruments), an initial reading (T=0) was made approximately 1-2 min after addition of the substrate solution, employing excitation at 485 nm and emission at 530 nm, to determine the background fluorescence of the control sample. After the 1 hr incubation, the samples were read for fluorescence as above (T = 1 hr).